

# Plains may again become home where buffalo roam

9-13-89

WASHINGTON (AP) — The Great Plains are agriculturally obsolete and bound to revert to the tall grasses and the buffalo, claim two researchers.

The only question left, they say, is whether the transformation will be eased by government or imposed by brute market forces.

Frank J. Popper and Deborah Epstein Popper — he heads the urban affairs department at Rutgers, the state university of New Jersey, and she teaches geography there — believe that about one more generation can support itself by farming on the Great Plains before vast stretches of 10 states are simply abandoned.

As might be imagined, their view

is none too welcome in the area. "The Nuttiest Ideas Never Seem to Die" is what a Fargo (N.D.) Forum editorial said.

But the Poppers insist it was a mistake to break the sod in the first place, a historic error fostered by the 1862 Homestead Act, which gave 160 acres to anyone willing to settle the land and stay five years.

The Poppers first spelled out their idea in an article in Planning magazine, published by the American Planning Association, and elaborated on it in telephone interviews.

They wrote:

"We believe that over the next generation the Plains will, as a result of the largest, longest-running agricultural and environmental

miscalculation in America, become almost totally depopulated."

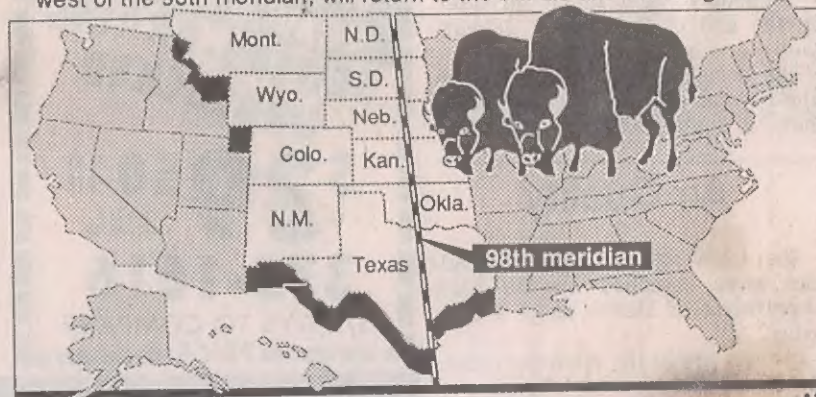
They described the area from the 98th meridian west to the Rockies as "endlessly windswept, nearly treeless, semiarid, austere beautiful, historically untenable, increasingly empty and now facing ecological devastation."

Ultimately, they predict, about a third to half the land of the 10 states — most of the Dakotas, the western two-thirds of Nebraska, the western halves of Kansas, Oklahoma and Texas, the eastern tips of New Mexico and Colorado, eastern Wyoming and all but westernmost Montana — will return to its "pre-white condition."

(See PLAINS, Page A2)

## The Great Plains States

Two N.J. professors predict that this arid area, east of the Rockies and west of the 98th meridian, will return to the buffalo and the tall grasses



seph A. Jenkins. Although an applicant has been chosen for the job, an offer hadn't been made as of Tuesday night because a committee formed by the Provo Library Board was still making background checks, he said.

"Hopefully we'll make an offer by the end of the week," Jenkins said.

The decision was made after the library committee received more than 40 applications and narrowed

## Air Quality

The following air pollution readings were compiled by the Utah Department of Health as of 9 a.m. today.

Listings are in the following order: locale, air quality, today's reading on a scale where 101 or higher is unhealthy, and the abbreviation of

choices and to four applicants and met with the mayor to make the final selection, Jenkins said.

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